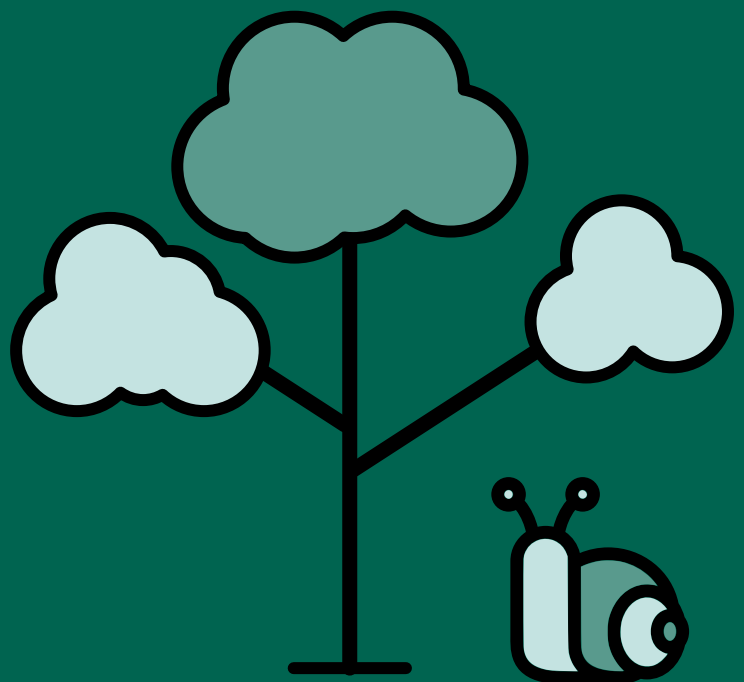


**YORKSHIRE
& HUMBER
CLIMATE
COMMISSION**

Nature's Recovery

Insight Paper | Land, Water, Nature, Food Panel
March 2024



Key messages

The Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission was established in early 2021, tasked with driving ambitious climate action across the region. This paper is one of a series¹ of insight papers, outlining recommendations and supporting evidence for leaders and decision makers in Yorkshire and the Humber.

The recommendations outlined in this paper focus on nature's recovery. Aimed at local authorities, regional bodies and organisations striving for regional change, they are actions that can be implemented now, under the current national policy landscape. If adopted, these actions will enable a transition towards nature-positive decision making that supports the recovery of our natural environment and wildlife.

Our recommendations include:

- Local authorities to commit to protecting 30% of land and sea for wildlife by 2030 ('30 by 30')
- Create a regional land and water strategic framework to support nature-first, multi-benefit decision making
- Develop a regional observatory to monitor the health of nature in Yorkshire and Humber
- Develop nature-focused learning opportunities for children
- Involve the region's citizens in policy making and practical initiatives that focus on nature's recovery.

The paper discusses the thinking behind these recommendations, including multi-benefit approaches to land and water management; putting nature first in decision making; creating better connectivity between habitats; and inviting nature back into our urban spaces. We also explore the barriers to implementing these changes, including our human disconnect from nature; financial and practical barriers; an historic blurring of our perceptions; and the human processes that perpetuate environmental degradation and need to be reversed.

The paper was led by the Commission's Land, Water, Nature, Food Panel and authored by Sam Herbert. The recommendations were developed through a consultative process, drawing on the knowledge and experience of our Commissioners, panel members, Delivering Impact session² speakers Professor Sir John Lawton, Tessa Levens (Yorkshire Wildlife Trust) and Dr Nicky Rivers (Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust), and members of the public who shared their feedback and ideas via an online survey³.

¹ The full series will be available at: <https://yorksandhumberclimate.org.uk/insight-papers>

² The Delivering Impact session on Nature's Recovery is available to watch on YouTube: https://youtu.be/UdN9n_uDS4o?si=TUADGIMOJMcAH84

³ Fifty-five people responded to the survey via our Commonplace platform: <https://yorkshirecap.commonplace.is/>

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The Yorkshire & Humber Climate Action Plan

The Yorkshire & Humber Climate Action Plan was developed by the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission with the help of more than 500 people from across the region. It calls for meaningful climate leadership from larger institutions in government and the public and private sectors to deliver “significant, tangible contributions” to help tackle the climate and ecological emergency.

The Plan includes the following actions related to nature's recovery:

18/48. Promote resilience / net zero in land use by restoring and enhancing the region's many key natural assets including moorlands, peat bogs, grasslands, soils, woodlands, wetlands, flood and coastal zones.

20. Promote nature-based solutions and the development of blue-green infrastructure wherever possible, recognising that this will contribute to net zero and our response to the ecological as well as the climate crisis.

47. Promote changes in planning that put climate and nature at the heart of the design and delivery of local plans.

What's the issue?

Climate change and biodiversity loss are intrinsically linked, and our natural world is at a crisis point.

There has been, on average, a 69% decrease in monitored wildlife populations across the globe between 1970 and 2018⁴. A million plants and animals are currently threatened with extinction, and it is now widely understood that our actions as humans are causing this catastrophic damage to our natural world. Not only is this devastating for our wildlife, it's also a big problem for humanity. We rely on a thriving natural world for our food, building materials, fuel, water, and the air we breathe. Research is increasingly showing that being in and around nature supports our health and wellbeing⁵, and the World Economic Forum estimates that over half of global GDP (\$44 trillion) is at threat from loss of nature⁶ – making it a very real business and political issue.

The UK is in the bottom 10% globally for biodiversity⁷; in short, we are one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. The stark findings of the 2023 State of Nature report⁸ for the UK shows 16% of species are threatened with extinction, distribution of many pollinating invertebrates have declined by 18% since 1970, the abundance of 13 species of seabird has fallen by 24% on average since 1986, and 54% of flowering plant species have decreased in distribution across Great Britain. In addition, we are seeing an increase in invasive non-native species in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments. Yorkshire and the Humber is home to around two thirds of the UK's native wildlife⁹. The region's varied, and often rare, habitats such as chalk streams, limestone pavements and coastal cliffs allow many species currently under threat to live and breed here, meaning Yorkshire and the Humber is of national importance in the effort to halt and reverse biodiversity decline.

The UK government's policy is to protect 30% of land and sea for wildlife by the year 2030 ('30 by 30'). However, reported figures show that only 3% of land and 8% of seas are currently protected in designated and properly managed reserves¹⁰. As the Yorkshire and Humber region contains two national parks, over 360 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and over 160 miles of coastline, there is ample opportunity to contribute to the recovery of nature. However, over 70% of the region's land is agricultural (predominantly for grazing livestock and cereal

⁴ WWF (2022) Living Planet Report 2022. Available at: <https://livingplanet.panda.org/en-GB/>

⁵ Forbes (2017) The Science Behind How Nature Affects Your Health. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/billfrist/2017/06/15/the-science-behind-how-nature-affects-your-health/?sh=454417e415ae>

⁶ World Economic Forum (2020) The Future Of Nature And Business. Available at: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_Future_Of_Nature_And_Business_2020.pdf

⁷ Natural History Museum, Biodiversity Intactness Index data. Available at: <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/data/biodiversity-indicators/about-the-biodiversity-intactness-index.html>

⁸ State of Nature Partnership (2023) State of Nature. Available at: https://stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP25999-State-of-Nature-main-report_2023_FULL-DOC-v12.pdf

⁹ Provisional figures from pre-release of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's State of Nature in Yorkshire report.

¹⁰ Wildlife and Countryside Link (2022) 2022 Progress Report on 30x30 in England. Available at: <https://wcl.org.uk/2022-progress-report-30x30-in-england.asp>

crops¹¹) and a further 8% is developed with housing, industry and transport infrastructure¹². With so much regional land managed in this way, we must balance human demands on land in the region with high quality habitat for the many other species attempting to survive here.

What needs to happen?

The recovery and restoration of nature in the region requires a series of interventions in how we use and manage our land and water, as well as a change in mindset where our natural environment and species other than humans are taken into consideration as decisions are being made. There are a number of positive things already happening in the region that demonstrate how wildlife can be incorporated into our ways of life, and opportunities to aid the recovery of nature whilst providing benefits specific to people. Here we outline some of the key approaches explored in our Delivering Impact session.

Land that provides multiple uses and benefits

We have a need to create more space for other species to thrive but also a finite amount of land on which to do it. Where land is managed to provide multiple benefits to people and nature more broadly, we create win-win scenarios. For example, the flood management scheme developed to prevent the River Aire flooding Leeds incorporated the restoration of habitats upstream. This slowed down the water flow following intense rainfall, reducing the need for tall, expensive concrete flood walls in the city centre whilst improving conditions for wildlife¹³. Scaling up this kind of approach in decision-making across the region could have a significant impact on the revitalisation of our wildlife.

When in a healthy state, nature is also good at locking up carbon dioxide (CO₂). Different soils, plants and wetlands capture CO₂ in different quantities and at different speeds, so we need a variety of species (biodiversity) to support short- and long-term carbon capture. For example, water-logged habitats such as peatlands and saltmarshes that are close to their natural state lock up small quantities of CO₂ each year for millennia. When compared with woodlands, peatlands lock up more carbon per square meter in the long term. But trees can capture and store large quantities of CO₂ when they are young, so provide faster means to lock up carbon. We are also learning more about the carbon storage capabilities of our marine environment. Seagrasses, for example, are not only capable of transforming their surroundings to become thriving ecosystems filled with a diverse range of species, but they also have the potential to capture and store huge quantities of carbon¹⁴. By having a diverse range of healthy, natural

¹¹ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2023) Agricultural facts: Yorkshire & the Humber region. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/agricultural-facts-england-regional-profiles/agricultural-facts-yorkshire-and-the-humber-region>

¹² Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (2022) Land Use statistics, England 2022. Available at: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjojOWYxN2QyYWMtMTFmOS00MDQyLTgyZWItYzdmMWYxNzRlMjYwIiwidCI6ImJmMzQ2ODEwLTJjN2QtNDNkZS1hODcyLTl0YTJjZjM5OTVhOCJ9>

¹³ New Civil Engineer (2020) Future of Floods | Slowing the River Aire in Leeds. Available at: <https://www.newcivilengineer.com/the-future-of/future-of-floods-slowng-the-river-aire-in-leeds-17-12-2020/>

¹⁴ The Wildlife Trusts. Natural solutions to the climate crisis: Super seagrass. Available at: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/natural-solutions-climate-change/seagrass>

land and water environments, we create a stronger, more resilient ability to take excess CO₂ out of our atmosphere and store the carbon safely, in the short and longer term.

Designing for nature

How we design and plan our use of space is a key tool for overcoming the conflicting demands on land use. We currently plan for what is referred to as 'grey infrastructure'; things like schools, hospitals, houses, roads and factories all fall into this category. For this kind of planning, laws, policies and standards already exist that provide a way for conflicts over the proposed land use to be resolved by looking for the optimal solution. However, in focusing just on narrow or siloed human needs, we have engineered the wider ecosystems we are part of, making them dysfunctional.

If we were to plan for nature, not just humans, we could re-engineer our ecosystems to be functional again. Designing places for farmland, forests, grasslands and moorlands (green infrastructure) and rivers, streams, wetlands and oceans (blue infrastructure) could support nature's recovery through offering a solution to resolving land-use conflicts, improving financing, and creating more equity in how land is managed. Because we have created so much damage to our natural world, accelerated human intervention is needed to bring it back to a healthy state. People can become agents in nature's healing.

The Yorkshire Peat Partnership is a good example of the extent to which positive human action can strategically restore nature in the region. Yorkshire contains roughly 90,000 hectares of blanket bog which, when healthy, supports unique biodiversity, reduces risks of wildfire, improves water quality and is an important carbon store. Much of this land was degraded, but over the past 14 years the Yorkshire Peat Partnership have been working to systematically restore these lands by nurturing a collaborative approach amongst decision-makers, funders and landowners. Over 47,343 hectares already have restoration work completed or under way, and more capabilities are being unlocked through an improved understanding and increased funding.

Connecting habitat through corridors and 'stepping stones'

In 2010, Sir John Lawton and his expert panel outlined 24 principles in the report Making Space for Nature¹⁵ which gained significant support and influenced a number of government policies. These principles are often now referred to in the shorthand presented in the original paper: more, bigger, better and joined.

Whilst part of that is about ensuring significantly-sized spaces (such as our national parks and SSSIs) are increased in number and made better for species other than people, it also outlines the importance of connecting these spaces. Progressing nature's recovery doesn't always require vast areas of land; sometimes it requires recognising where smaller spaces, particularly linear ones between the bigger areas, can be improved. Creating connections between habitats is a key aspect of supporting nature's recovery, enabling species to move and migrate in line

¹⁵ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2010) Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network. Available at: <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130402151656/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf>

with their survival needs. One way to achieve this is to improve the quality of grasslands, hedgerows and river banks along existing linear connectors in the region, such as footpaths, railway lines, canals and rivers. It is also possible to create 'stepping stones', where larger patches of habitat are created along a route, close enough to each other to allow species to easily travel from one to the next. This was achieved in the South Downs¹⁶, providing a replicable example for similar projects in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Nature's recovery in human-dominated environments

When thinking about nature we often focus on rural settings, but urban environments are just as important. We tend to see ourselves as separate to nature, but we are not. We must remember this if we are to succeed in nature's restoration. Nature's recovery encompasses us as humans and how we interact with the other species we share these spaces with. The Yorkshire and Humber region contains seven cities, plus many significantly-sized towns, each with their own unique context – they differ in size and location; some are coastal, others are inland; some are dominated by particular industries, others are a melting pot for diverse activities. But they all have one key thing in common – lots of people. With that in mind, it's important to understand the services and provisions that nature and biodiversity provide for the people living and working in these parts of the region. It's also important that we recognise the impact large populations of people have on other species, and start to make changes in our own policies, practices and behaviours to protect their survival.

Our urban spaces have evolved to become networks of concrete-covered ground, hard structures, and busy transport networks. Some wildlife has adapted to these surroundings, finding ways to live alongside us on our terms, but these accommodating species are often persecuted as a result, seen as 'pests' that invade our human-dominated spaces. And yet, we know that the hostile environments we create are also detrimental to our own wellbeing. We know that greener spaces, rich in biodiverse plant and animal life, provide us with improved health and wellbeing, better air and water quality, and protection and resilience in the face of extreme weather events. When we design with a nature-first mindset, we provide a better quality of life for ourselves as well as other species.

Programmes such as Building with Nature¹⁷ and the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM)¹⁸ provide frameworks for planners and developers to integrate nature into their developments, improving the output for people and the environment rather than nature being an afterthought or problem to overcome. Street trees, wildflower roadside verges (see Figure 2) and nature-friendly parks or sports grounds can provide a network of green infrastructure in urban spaces. Community gardens and participation in nature connection activities can re-engage people with nature, helping to restore our understanding that we are a part of nature¹⁹, whilst providing social and health benefits.

¹⁶ South Downs National Park Authority (2015) Three years of Nature Improvement Areas. Available at: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/three-years-of-nature-improvement-areas/>

¹⁷ See <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/>

¹⁸ See <https://bregroup.com/products/breeam/?cn-reloaded=1>

¹⁹ Finding Nature (2023) Nature Contact is not Connection. Available at: <https://findingnature.org.uk/2023/01/05/infinity-of-connection/>

As well as changing the priorities when planning new spaces or developments, we must look at how we enhance and restore nature in our existing urban settings. In Sheffield alone, there are 4,290 hectares of urban gardens, 685 hectares of urban woodland and 2,724 hectares of amenity grassland, such as playing fields and parks. Many of these are being replanted and restored to become thriving habitats. Increasing these efforts at scale has the potential to provide an uplift in healthy habitats within urban environments. However, it is not enough to simply ‘tweak’ our surroundings. We must look at the full variety of urban potential for nature and enhance the quality of habitat across these spaces, improving quality of life for people and other species alike.

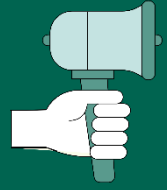


Figure 2: Example of roadside wildflowers providing improved habitat (images courtesy of Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust)

There are many positive actions happening in our region and the increasing recognition from government about the urgency of nature’s recovery is heartening. But if we are to bring our natural world back from the brink of collapse – or even just to meet the initial ‘30 by 30’ target and start things moving in the right direction – policies must put nature first, collective action must be en masse, restoration projects must happen at enormous scale, and our own behaviours must change to respect, understand and live in balance with all species attempting to survive alongside us. This is not a small task and it is not yet happening at the necessary pace and scale.

Public priorities

We asked people from Yorkshire and the Humber to share their views on nature's recovery via our public engagement platform Commonplace.



Of the 55 people who responded:

- 85% think this is an important issue
- Just 6% are confident that the issue is being addressed
- 45% think it's possible to do more to address this issue in Yorkshire and the Humber without significant changes in national policy.

Why is it not happening yet?

There are barriers to nature's recovery in our region that need to be overcome. Some are to do with understanding the need for the protection and restoration of nature, and some are the practical challenges in implementing the necessary changes.

Not everyone understands that we are part of nature, or the threat we currently face

Many children do not have contact with our natural world or the opportunity to learn about wildlife and the ecosystems we are part of. At present, our core school education contains little content about the natural world, meaning only those with the means and motivation to seek education elsewhere learn how we rely on healthy ecosystems.

Our lack of understanding about other species is also a key problem. Insects are frequently seen as pests or annoyances that we should eradicate but they are essential within ecosystems, beneficial to our human processes and needs, and often more fascinating and beautiful than we allow ourselves to see.

The financial and practical conditions to enable change in land use are not being met

Costs for restoration works often have to be met by landowners and farmers prior to any funding being received. Skilled workers in conservation (e.g. moorland restoration) move into more lucrative or less challenging roles as they face harsh conditions, low pay and physically demanding tasks.

Land is finite and there are conflicting demands on what we do with it. In addition, there is a misguided perception that nature's protection and recovery is fundamentally in conflict with other pressures on land use, such as food production, energy generation or housing. However, well-managed land can deliver provisions for people as well as provide rich habitat for other species.

Our perceptions are skewed

When changes to land management are proposed, there is often concern that by making more provision for nature, we are compromising either the look of the landscape, or how accessible, manageable or profitable the land is. In addition, we have been conditioned to reject the notion that true wildlife can be beautiful.

UK landscapes have been nature-depleted for decades, therefore there is a limited understanding of what a healthy natural environment actually looks like; our perceptions of wildlife are skewed by the degraded environment we live in. We are used to seeing monoculture grassland (where one species of grass dominates and there is very little biodiversity) and thinking it is beautiful countryside.

People need to see examples of where changes have been made successfully to welcome nature-first proposals, to feel confident in implementing similar changes in their own land and to recognise the beauty in more natural landscapes.

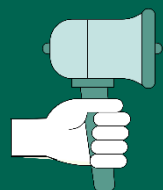
We've set damaging processes in motion

Much of the damage already done leads to more damage occurring. At present, the degraded state of our countryside is contributing to the problem, rather than providing part of the solution. For example, about 80% of peatlands in the UK are damaged, largely due to human actions such as draining to create more space for agriculture. Over 7,000 km of man-made drains (called 'grips') have been cut into Yorkshire's peatlands, drying out the land and leading to biodiversity loss, release of carbon, increased flooding, wildfires and erosion. Damaged peatlands shift from being a carbon sink to being a carbon source, and also have an impact on flood peaks, with water running off moorlands into urban environments rather than being stored in bogs or slowed by healthy vegetation. Until repaired, the problems we've set in motion on these lands will continue to perpetuate wider issues for people and wildlife.

Public priorities

Those who responded to our survey felt the following actions are most important:

- Increase investment in nature recovery projects
- Develop a regional land use framework
- Improve education about nature and humans as part of nature
- Transition to regenerative farming
- Raise the profile of nature and increase awareness



Views that emerged from the survey included:

Habitat creation needed

New wildlife habitats need to be created across the region, with our commenters particularly

focused on the opportunities available in urban areas. Proposed ideas include wild verges, improved wildlife corridors, wild areas within parks, new developments that incorporate wildlife features (such as nesting spaces), and reallocating road space to nature. In rural settings, truly wild spaces should be created free from human activity, hedge creation should be a priority and large landowners should be encouraged to plant nature-friendly native species such as oak.

“Adopt the '15-minute neighbourhood' principle to reduce need for as much road space, vehicle use, pollution etc. Utilise this to create more nature-friendly spaces.”

Citizens involvement required

Citizens and communities need to be engaged with nature recovery to drive the changes required. This could include the establishment of local citizens assemblies; educating people on nature at risk; bringing communities together to focus on threats and opportunities; and providing more opportunities within schools to access and engage with nature and its recovery.

“Perhaps citizens' assemblies across the region on nature recovery could help with driving the political and systemic changes needed. In the end all climate solutions are delivered locally. Getting communities more deeply involved with influencing policy, action, and delivery can reshape communities, politics and landscapes urban and rural.”

Food must take priority

A number of comments asserted that agriculture should be prioritised ahead of nature, and that food security is of paramount importance.

“I would like to know that we have food security before setting aside productive land for nature.”

Planning policies must protect nature

The planning system should be reformed to prioritise nature. This includes protecting nature from development, but also ensuring that new developments are planned in such a way as to benefit nature. Spatial planning must also consider access to urban and suburban green space.

“Rework planning guidelines so that new developments are nature-friendly, including reducing space given over to private cars (use and parking).”

Scepticism of nature crisis

A number of comments are sceptical of the premise that nature is in crisis in the region. In particular, these respondents felt that the paper does not adequately go into detail about the loss of nature within the region itself, and question whether global trends are applicable. In response, this final version of the report includes more evidence about the state of nature within England and our region.

“In order to assess the need for investment in nature recovery in this region details should be provided on species loss/threats in this region. The report currently lacks sufficient

detail on the position in this region, it gives information summarized to suggest a poor outlook which may not be relevant to this region.”

National action required

Action is required from national government to drive this agenda: at a policy level, to provide more resources, and to ensure enforcement of existing legislation.

“In the end, it depends on National Government intervention more than on local involvement. It is National Government that makes the rules and enforces them. Without that impetus there will be so many loopholes that putting plans into action will be time consuming and less effective.”

Changes to land management

A number of comments called for changes to the way land is farmed and managed to benefit nature, with new financial regimes that would prioritise payments for ecosystem services. Specific areas where policy needs to better protect nature’s interests include National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and those parts of the uplands currently managed as grouse moors.

“Existing designated areas (National Parks and AONB) are not effectively contributing to nature recovery and cannot be fully counted toward 30 by 30. These areas will also need significant enhancement and investment if we are to reverse biodiversity decline.”

What actions can be taken regionally to progress?

The following recommendations are aimed at decision makers in local authorities, regional bodies and other organisations driving change across Yorkshire and the Humber. Informed by the evidence cited in this paper, they have been collaboratively developed to enable a transition towards nature-positive decision making that supports the recovery of our natural environment and wildlife.

Policy and strategy

- Through their Local Nature Recovery Strategies, encourage all the region’s local and combined authorities to commit to a ‘30 by 30’ target for nature’s recovery in the Yorkshire and Humber region.
- Encourage all Local Nature Recovery Strategies to include the marine environment.
- Create a regional land and water strategic framework to support decision making led by nature-first, multi-benefit approaches that appropriately balances conflicting land use issues and protects both nature and food security.
- Develop regional pilots demonstrating infrastructure that works with nature, encouraging the same rigour, legal and political support as we currently apply to traditional infrastructure that doesn’t support nature.

- Develop just transition strategies for evolving the chemical industry into an environmentally-sound future economy, phasing out the use of detrimental chemicals (both domestic and commercial).
- Develop a regional observatory that monitors key indicators of wildlife populations, habitat and the state of land and water in the region, providing baselines and measures for understanding progress.
- Explore opportunities for regional standards, encouraging all new developments to adhere to nature-focused frameworks such as Building with Nature or BREEAM.
- Explore regional ways to reward nature-positive land management and instill penalties for detrimental techniques within industries and activities with high impact on nature, such as licensing for grouse shooting.

Finance and investment

- Explore opportunities to scale up restoration of peatlands, wetlands and national parks to improve the quality of existing habitat in the region through increased funding provision.
- Help businesses to understand their impact on nature and become nature positive. Encourage them to pro-actively invest in/pursue nature-recovery activities.
- Increase investment and funds available for nature restoration work, facilitating better rewards for conservation work – particularly where it requires working in harsh conditions – to improve attraction and retention of skilled workers.

Culture and behaviour

- Create the space for knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer support in transitioning agricultural practices in the region to regenerative farming approaches.
- Develop and scale up opportunities for children to engage with and learn about our natural world and their surrounding ecosystems, through improved school education and extra-curricular activities in nature.
- Raise the profile of nature, our reliance on it, and its wider value and importance through attracting support from MPs and influential figures in the region and showcasing best practice and collective progress.
- Provide opportunities for citizen engagement in nature recovery at a policy level to drive systemic change, and at a practical level within communities.

What role could the Commission play in enabling these actions?

The following recommendations are specific to the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission. Bringing together representatives from the public sector, the private sector and the third sector, the Commission is uniquely placed to support organisations looking to adopt the actions identified above.

- Encourage commitments to the '30 by 30' target through our local authority network and Regional Policy Forum, including within the planning system.

- Make the case for a regional land use framework that contributes to national aims but allows flexibility in approach to suit the specific needs of the region, including planning blue/green infrastructure.
- Through the Commission’s Climate Action Pledge, create a programme to connect businesses with the means to better understand their impact on nature, reduce negative effects and invest in nature-positive initiatives.
- Influence regional decision-making to incorporate nature and prioritise multi-benefit initiatives.
- Raise the profile of nature recovery and restoration programmes, attracting new collaborations, partnerships and funding.
- Challenge Commissioners and panel members to honestly interrogate their own organisations and influence to understand where nature is taken into account and where it could be given stronger consideration.
- Collate examples of best practice and showcase real-world successes that can be replicated and scaled up.
- Advocate on behalf of the region’s nature with national government, arguing for policy change, investment and enforcement of existing legislation.]

Recommendations from this series of insight papers will be prioritised by the Commission, as reflected in the updated Climate Action Plan (due for release in 2024), future policy briefings and the Commission’s ongoing work programme.

Links with other insight papers from this series

This is one of a [series of insight papers](#) from the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission²⁰.

Whilst each one will focus on a specific topic²¹, there are many cross-cutting themes and interrelated issues, not least the overarching goals of our work: to achieve net zero emissions, climate resilience, nature's recovery and social equity across Yorkshire and the Humber.

Most closely related to this topic are:

- [Sustainable Food Systems](#)
- How Can Nature Help Us?
- Upskilling the Region’s Workforce
- Health and Wellbeing

²⁰ Once published, the insight papers will be available at: <https://yorksandhumberclimate.org.uk/insight-papers>

²¹ Delivering Impact sessions for each topic are available to view on YouTube, at: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCQrEp96kZgz29_zUWh4lUnLW79j_PqZH